

Manuel Carlos Tan Jr., M.D. (1947-2012) “ A Tribute to Manny”

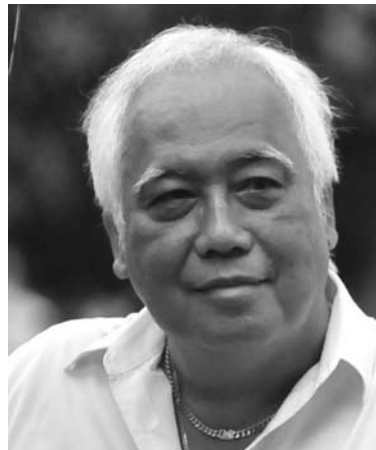
Gil M. Vicente, M.D.

La Bamba.... Oh CAROL..... VOLARE.... The songs are still there but the singer is gone. Yes, during entertainment time in the local as well as in the ASEAN ENT Congresses, these songs reverberated as the leader of the band started rolling up the stage. There was so much energy, so much fun when Manny's voice delivered the songs. These signature songs will remain in our memory as Manny finally sings the Swan Song.

I have known Manny ever since I joined our fraternity in the UP College of Medicine. During the rites, he was fond of using a stick to hit the palmar soles.... and when hit hard ... OMG..... it was very painful. That was one of the most dreaded stations of the ceremonial rites. When my turn came, he asked me if I had gone through his famous stick trick, I answered “Not yet po.” For being honest I was just given a slight pat.... *Nakalusot ako* in short.

Just after residency in 1988, Manny and I were both representing the Philippine delegation in Jakarta. During one of our free nights, we were joined by our great beloved mentor, Dr. Mariano Caparas. All night long till the wee hours of the morning, we stayed in Dr. Caparas' hotel room. The discussion revolved around just one interesting topic and that was all about the nose. It was at that time that the term “the crazy NOSE” was coined. At 4 am, Dr. Caparas went to sleep happy. I went home crazy and Manny just couldn't help but become nosy.

Encounters like these became more often when I became more involved in the society. He was an upcoming President and I was an upcoming officer. Every time he visited Manila from Davao, he would usually call me and we would go out to have dinner and then drink a bottle or two. We would talk on different topics starting with our dreams for the society, our activities



in the future, about politics and about our research works. He was fond of telling me stories on innovative things he did in Davao most specially when confronted with difficult situations. His was a creative mind that aimed for basic rationality and utmost practicality.

We were both involved deeply in the society when he was both President of the society and upcoming President of the ASEAN ENT Congress in 1998. I was the President of the upcoming INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM OF INFECTION and ALLERGY of the NOSE (ISIAN) in 1999. For both of us it was an uphill

challenging battle, an experience where we would gain friends as well as lose some. We carried crosses that were as big as you could imagine. We were able to survive the true test of mental and physical stress.... And that was because we both believed in perseverance....perseverance and perseverance. Our bullheadedness was transformed to superior workmanship and leadership par excellence.

Years passed by and history tells us that money matters at the ASEAN Congress in Davao got a little bit mystifying. The controversy turned a bit uncontrolled. One President after another tried their best to settle the issue once and for all but in vain. And finally when my time came as President of the society in 2008, I was able to convince Manny to finally turn over the controversial pot of the decade. That became one of the top stories of the history of the society. The drama took place and the memory lingers on.

Manny indeed made a mark in our history. The songs he sang, the words he spoke, the dreams he foretold and the drama he created..... these are some of many things Manny managed to make while on earth. May he rest in PEACE.